

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

FEA-01 OMB-01 /068 W
----- 028368

R 271754Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8496
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMCONSUL GOTEBOG BY POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SW
SUBJECT: SWEDISH ELECTIONS: CENTER PARTY THROWS DOWN GAUNTLET
(ALMOST) ON ENERGY QUESTION

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. CENTER PARTY CHAIRMAN
THORBJORN FALLDIN ON AUGUST 25 ENERGIZED THE DEBATE
AMONG RIVAL POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN
BY STATING, IN A RADIO INTERVIEW, THAT A CATEGORICAL
CONDITION FOR HIS PARTICIPATION IN A POSSIBLE NON-
SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT (WHICH HE, PRESUMABLY, WOULD LEAD)
IS: (1) "THAT NO ADDITIONAL NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS BE
PLANNED; (2) THAT THOSE "ON THE DRAWING BOARDS" BE
CANCELLED; (3) THAT THOSE UNDER CONSTRUCTION BE
COMPLETED ONLY IF FINAL CONTRACTS ARE IN FORCE; AND
(4) THAT A PLAN BE DRAWN UP FOR THE DISMANTLING OF ALL
POWER PLANTS NOW IN OPERATION BY 1985 "UNLESS SECURITY
PROBLEMS ARE SOLVED BY THAT TIME."

2. FALLDIN'S COLLEAGUES IN THE TWO OTHER OPPOSITION
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PARTIES HAD QUICK RESPONSES TO HIS "CONDITIONS" FOR

GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION. LIBERAL PARTY CHAIRMAN PER AHLMARK SAID HIS PARTY COULD NOT PROMISE TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR ENERGY PRODUCTION BY 1985, THAT SWEDEN COULD NOT MANAGE WITHOUT NUCLEAR ENERGY, BUT THAT THE LIBERAL PARTY WOULD NOT TAKE AN ABSOLUTELY FINAL STAND ON THE QUESTION OF ENERGY POLICY FOR THE 1980'S AT THIS TIME. MODERATE PARTY CHAIRMAN GOSTA BOHMAN SAID THAT HE DID NOT REGARD FALLDIN'S STATEMENT AS AN ULTIMATUM, THAT THE FIRST TASK OF A NON-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT WOULD BE A THOROUGH STUDY OF NUCLEAR ENERGY PROBLEMS, THAT SUCH A STUDY WOULD TAKE TWO TO THREE YEARS "WHICH WOULD GET A NEW GOVERNMENT THROUGH ITS FIRST TERM." SOCIAL DEMOCRATS COULD NOT RESIST EITHER COMMENTING ON FALLDIN'S STATEMENT. PRIME MINISTER PALME SAID IT REFLECTED THE INABILITY OF THE OPPOSITION TO UNITE ON A VIABLE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM WHILE MINISTER OF HOUSING INGVAR CARLSSON SAID IT WAS COMPLETELY UNREASONABLE. CARLSSON ADDED THAT A SHUT DOWN OF SWEDEN'S NUCLEAR ENERGY PLANTS, WHICH NOW PRODUCE 20 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S TOTAL ENERGY SUPPLY, WOULD DISRUPT THE COUNTRY'S ENERGY BALANCE AND PREVENT REQUIRED INVESTMENT IN HEAVY INDUSTRY.

3. ON AUGUST 26, FALLDIN TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE HAD BEEN MISINTERPRETED ON THE PREVIOUS DAY, THAT HIS STATEMENT COULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS ANY SORT OF ULTIMATUM AND THAT HE HAD MERELY REPEATED THE CENTER PARTY'S WELL-KNOWN POLICY ON THE NUCLEAR ENERGY ISSUE. HE SAID THAT 1985 WAS NOT AN ABSOLUTE DEADLINE FOR THE PHASING OUT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY PRODUCTION IN SWEDEN. A NON-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT WOULD, HOWEVER CREATE A COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THIS POSSIBILITY. HOPEFULLY SUCH A COMMISSION WOULD CONCLUDE THAT IT WOULD BE FEASIBLE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS BY 1985. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. COMMENT: THE MEDIA, WHICH HAS AVIDLY SOUGHT TO DISCOVER DAMAGING DIVISIONS AMONG THE NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES, GAVE EXTENSIVE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO THE MOST RECENT MINI-DEBATE ON THE ENERGY QUESTION. WHILE THESE DIFFERENCES REFLECT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGAIN THE TREMENDOUS DIFFICULTIES THE THREE OPPOSITION PARTIES WOULD FACE IN ATTEMPTING TO FORGE A WORKABLE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM ONCE IN OFFICE, FALLDIN'S DENIAL THAT HE HAS LAID OUT CATEGORICAL CONDITIONS FOR CENTER PARTY PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALLAY SOMEWHAT THE OBVIOUS CONCERN DEMONSTRATED BY AHLMARK AND BOHMAN. IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT PALME AND OTHER SDP LEADERS MOST PROBABLY DO NOT CONSIDER THE

ENERGY QUESTION A USEFUL CAMPAIGN ISSUE SINCE THERE
ARE SERIOUS DIVISIONS AMONG THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS
THEMSELVES ON HOW FAR SWEDEN SHOULD GO IN NUCLEAR
POWER PRODUCTION. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.
SMITH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, CONSTRUCTION, PARTY LEADERS, PRESS CONFERENCES, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STOCKH04671
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760328-1070
From: STOCKHOLM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760811/aaaaairr.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 APR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <20 AUG 2004 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SWEDISH ELECTIONS: CENTER PARTY THROWS DOWN GAUNTLET (ALMOST) ON ENERGY QUESTION
TAGS: PINT, SW, (FALLDIN, THORBJORN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006